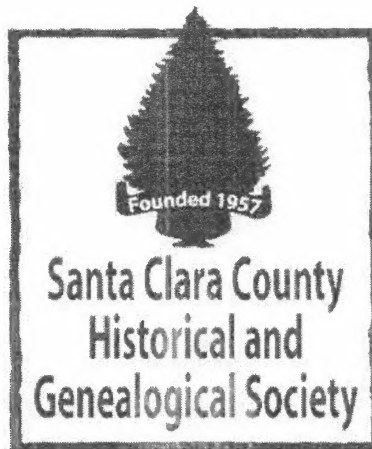


Marcello, the Mission Indian

Written as part of the Federal Writers' Project, a Works Progress Administration (WPA) Project, 1936

Notes:

- Author unknown, possibly Helen Jaret or Eleanor Irwin
- Original in possession of the Santa Clara County Archives, San Jose, California
- Scanned by the Santa Clara Historical and Genealogical Society



March 27, 1936

S-230

CLASS II - HISTORICAL

MARCELLO, THE MISSION INDIAN

✓ (19)

In any history or story of the Mission Santa Clara the name of Marcello the Indian invariably crops up. He was connected with the mission during the first 75 years of the 19th century.

A half-legendary figure in that he was supposed to have lived 125 years, he died in 1875 and was buried in the Catholic Cemetery of Santa Clara. There was nothing legendary about the latter 50 or 60 years of his life. He was right there in the flesh for all to see, but no one thought of putting down his recollections of early days. People at that time were too much interested in the present.

Marcello was a tall, statuesque Indian from Yuma, who towered above the squat Olhone Indians connected with the mission. It is said that he came up from Arizona with Fr. Junipero Serra at the founding of the first mission in 1777. He helped build the third mission and said that he had helped build the second in 1782.

By reason of his intelligence and majestic size, Marcello became a sort of chieftain among the mission Indians. As such he made a useful foreman for the whites. It is claimed that Marcello directed the cutting of willow shoots along the Guadalupe creek and their transport on Indians' backs for planting along the route of The Alameda.

In 1845 Governor Pico granted Marcello a rich tract of land called the Ulistae ranch along the Guadalupe

March 27, 1936

S-230

CLASS II - HISTORICAL

MARCELLO, THE MISSION INDIAN
(continued)

creek north of Santa Clara mission. The southern limits of this land touched the creek at a point where an old Spanish bridge used to cross. The first site of the mission was close by this same spot. Agnew Hospital now occupies part of the Ulistac grant. Marcello was swindled out of his land by an American, but was allowed to live on part of it until his death. It is now truck-farming land.

Marcello remembered where the first Mission Santa Clara had stood and pointed out the spot to two Americans, Charles Day, foreman of Laurel Wood Ranch, and John Leonard, foreman of a neighboring ranch. When Dr. Osborne of San Jose asked these men to point out the spot that Marcello showed them as the site of the first mission they disagreed; each indicated a different spot. The two locations are within 500 feet of each other, so the general site of the mission can be fixed within those limits.